

Social Media Policy 2025

Part 1: Employee's personal accounts



Every day, people discuss, debate and embrace brands in thousands of online conversations. Social media platforms are a great way to share content in a positive, inclusive and respectful way. They are a powerful tool for building pride and encouraging meaningful dialogue among community members. Using them provides us with the opportunity and ability to reach huge numbers of people across massive geographical areas, in a fast and immediate way.

However as with any communication tool there can be difficulties and challenges that people can find themselves in. **As an employer, Chelmsford City Council (CCC) wants to help you to participate with social media platforms in a responsible and safe way.**

When referring to **employees** in this policy, this includes:

- **All permanent and fixed-term** employees;
- **casual and agency workers**, including any other contracted workers;
- **volunteers** working on behalf of the council; and
- **councillors** representing the council and affiliated with a political party.

When you see **CCC, we, us, our** or **the council** this means **Chelmsford City Council**.



ourValues

Here at Chelmsford City Council [our values](#) mean that:

- **We trust employees** to use social media in a safe and sensible manner.
- **We encourage and empower employees** to be collaborative and creative in open and meaningful ways on social platforms.
- **We will provide employees with the right tools** and encourage learning so that you can be effective and responsive in an evolving social media environment.
- **We expect employees take personal responsibility** and to be accountable for the social content you create and share, whether it's in a personal or professional (work) capacity.

We encourage employees to:

- **Mention the council in your social bios** as your employer e.g. on LinkedIn.
- **Follow, engage with and share our social media posts**, events and stories. Help us to spread the word on what we do and celebrate our successes with us.
- **Express your own opinions** – just make it clear you aren't speaking on behalf of us (the council) when you do so.
- **Help us to make our socials a safe space** by reporting anything illegal or inappropriate you've noticed, including any harassment you've experienced.

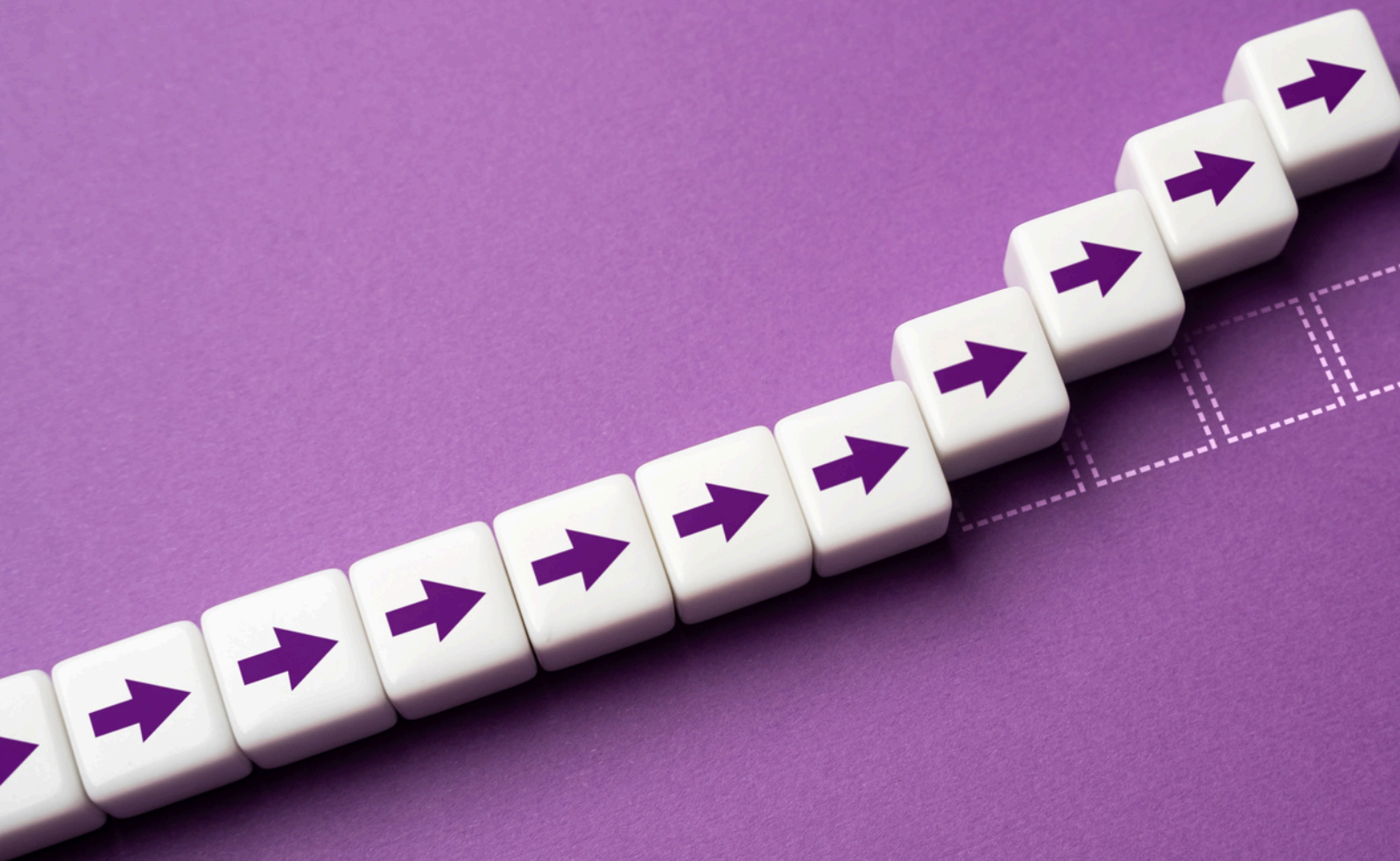


Reading and following the expectations and guidance provided in this policy keeps you (our employee), us (CCC) and our followers safe and protected while using and engaging with social media platforms. Remember — be nice, have fun but be smart!

Social media platforms include but are not restricted to the below. The channels we currently use are those listed from 1 to 7.

1. **Facebook** (incl. Messenger)
2. **Instagram**
3. **X** (formerly Twitter)
4. **LinkedIn**
5. **YouTube**
6. **Pinterest**
7. **Nextdoor**
8. TikTok
9. Whatsapp Channels
10. Threads
11. Snapchat
12. Telegram
13. WeChat
14. Reddit
15. Tumblr
16. Quora
17. Flickr
18. Twitch
19. Bluesky
20. blogs and chat rooms.





Our social media expectations

The following are our expectations for all of us to follow.

This means they apply to you, as our employee, when you are using social media. This is regardless of whether it is personally when outside of work and/or for business purposes as part of your job.

Our social media expectations:

1

We uphold the values and reputation of the council, acting lawfully, ethically, and in accordance with council policies.

2

We have read and will follow this social media policy and associated toolkits. We understand that we are all potential brand ambassadors for the council, but not all of us are social media experts, so we agree to listen to and act on appropriate advice given.

3

We read advice and undertake training where relevant, to ensure that we are correctly and safely using different social media platforms in line with the latest best practice.

4

We only use personal credentials, and not work ones, for personal accounts e.g. we do not use our work email address or work contact numbers for our logins or CCC references in our handles.

5

We use careful judgement and common sense – consistent with CCC's values – and exercise caution when posting and sharing. We will avoid endorsements or promoting views, organisations or content that could conflict with these values.

6

We accept that we are personally responsible for content we publish online. We think carefully about the consequences before liking, sharing, or commenting on posts, especially those related to political, social, or council matters. We avoid openly criticising the council, its employees or councillors publicly on social media. Remember that a posting on the web lives forever and could be referred to later in life. There are more appropriate ways to raise concerns – access our [grievance procedure](#), contact the service involved for an informal discussion first or use our [complaints procedure](#). If this approach fails to resolve your issue satisfactorily, you can make a [formal complaint](#).

7

We ensure the information we post is relevant, informed and factually correct. If we make an error, we correct our mistakes, admit we were incorrect and apologise (in line with [our values](#)), taking appropriate actions to rectify.

8

We are always polite and respectful. Spirited and passionate discussions are acceptable, but we are always respectful of others. We never make slurs, use discriminatory, provocative, defamatory or inflammatory language, personal insults, obscenities, hate speech or other similar conduct that would not be appropriate or acceptable in CCC's workplace. This includes creating or sharing comments, posts and images that are racist, sexist, homophobic, sexually explicit, abusive or otherwise offensive. Doing so will breach CCC's [Disciplinary Standards](#), [Code of Conduct](#) and could result in disciplinary action.

- 9 **We do not post, access or engage with any material that is inappropriate or illegal.** This includes posts, links, photos, GIFs and emojis that are insulting, threatening, discriminatory, bullying, embarrassing, of a sexual nature, obscene, defamatory, profane or fraudulent.
- 10 **We exercise care and respect everyone's right to privacy.** This means we have someone's permission (consent) before posting photos that they are in, especially those taken in our offices, in and around CCC venues and at CCC events. We also do not post any private or sensitive information about them. In doing so we ensure that we are complying with data protection laws (e.g. General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR).
- 11 **We respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws on content, logos and trademarks.** This means we use only licensed or original content and credit sources appropriately. We do not use any CCC owned logos, trademarks or imagery on our personal accounts unless we have been given permission to do so from MCT (Marketing and Communications Team).
- 12 **We do not provide or post confidential and classified information, including that for 'internal use only',** from CCC, our clients, our partners, our suppliers, our residents or our customers, on external social sites. This includes non-public financial information (such as forecasts and budget breakdowns), operational information, draft or work-in-progress strategies and plans, personal and sensitive data, and anything to do with a legal issue or case.



- 13 **We do not publicly discuss or speculate on CCC business performance or other sensitive matters about business results or plans.** This includes internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.



14

We distinguish clearly between personal views and official council positions. We do not imply or state that personal views are the official stance of the council. If discussing or publishing content that refers to CCC, we identify ourselves by name and, where relevant, our role at CCC and we make it clear that we are speaking for our self and not on behalf of CCC.

15

We don't engage with trolls, negative or disparaging comments about individual officers, the council, its brand or services. We politely disengage from discussions, or decline to comment, in situations that could lead to negative outcomes or risk harm to the reputation of the council.

Even if you are not an official online spokesperson for the council, you are one of our most vital assets in monitoring the social media landscape. Therefore, if you come across negative or disparaging posts or see third parties trying to spark negative conversations, you should pass the post(s) onto the Communications Team (email publicity@chelmsford.gov.uk with evidence e.g. screenshots). Avoid the temptation to react or respond yourself - we have trained comms officers who should be the ones to do this.

16

We understand that failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment, not being offered further casual work, removal of council responsibilities, or referral to the Standards Committee for councillors in line with CCC's Code of Conduct.

Always remember that:

- **Our guidelines and policies on values, ethics and confidentiality apply to employees in their everyday lives.** Your responsibilities to Chelmsford City Council as an employee do not end when you are off the clock and not at work. If you find yourself hesitant and wondering if you can talk and share something you learned at work, then don't.
- **Anything posted in social media can go viral, no matter what your privacy settings may be.** Be sure you're only posting content you would feel comfortable showing up in your managers' inbox, your colleagues' news feed or the front page of a news site. Even if you delete something as an afterthought, people may have already captured, saved and shared the information. This could be used against you and/or us in the future.

If you have any questions about the expectations in this policy or social media in general, please email publicity@chelmsford.gov.uk

Social media is dynamic, with new platforms and trends emerging regularly. Therefore, this policy will be reviewed annually (or more frequently if required) so that it remains compliant with evolving changes in legislation, best practices and consumer behaviours. Regular reviews and updates will ensure that this policy remains relevant and effective in addressing the challenges posed by the ever-changing digital landscape of social media.

By adhering to this policy as employees, we contribute to a professional, effective, and secure use of social media that benefits the council and the communities it serves.





<https://chelmsfordcity.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/SitePages/Social-media-accounts.aspx>



publicity@chelmsford.gov.uk

Last update: 07.08.25

Annual review due in August 2026

Marketing and Communications Team (MCT)